

sixty-seven pages devoted to this portion of the treatise, to give any thing like a clear and satisfactory account of the facts and arguments adduced by the author in relation to it. This, however, is comparatively of little importance, as the work itself is within the reach of all our readers, to whose attention we earnestly recommend it; we might almost say, that without an attentive study of it, no person can have a clear view of the chemistry of digestion and assimilation.

In applying the term chemistry to the operations of the living organism, it is proper to observe that Dr. P. has been careful to distinguish between the processes of this vital chemistry and those which take place when inorganic matter is operated upon in our laboratories. His views, on this point, are in part beautifully explained in the following sentence.

“The means by which that peculiarity of composition and of structure is produced, which is so remarkable in all organic substances, like the results themselves, are quite peculiar, and bear little or no resemblance to any artificial process of chemistry. For example, we have not, in artificial chemistry, any controul over individual molecules, but are obliged to direct our operations on a mass, formed of a large collection of molecules. The organic agent, on the contrary, having an apparatus of extreme minuteness, is enabled to operate on each individual molecule separately, and thus, according to the object designed, to exclude some molecules, and to bring others into contact. In these processes, it may be conceived that the molecules thus appropriately brought together, and at the same time guarded from extraneous influence by the organic agent, are in virtue of their own proper affinities, sufficiently disposed to unite, without requiring that any new properties should be communicated to them. Hence, the organic agent, in its simplest state, may be viewed as a power which so controuls certain organic matters, as to form them into an apparatus by which it arranges and organizes other matters, and thus effects its ulterior purposes. Where the operations of this simple organic agent terminate, those of another and more effective organic agent may be supposed to begin, which, by carrying the general process of organization a step further, adapts the organized material for the operations of a third and yet higher agent. Thus, each new agent may be supposed to possess more or less controul over all those below itself, and to have the power of appropriating their services, until at length, at the top of the scale, we reach the perfection of organized existence.”

D. F. C.

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XXII. *A Practical Treatise on Medical Jurisprudence, with so much of Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, and the Practice of Medicine and Surgery, as are essential to be known by Members of Parliament, Lawyers, Coroners, Magistrate, Officers in the Army and Navy, and Private Gentlemen, and all the Laics relating to Medical Practitioners with Explanatory Plates.* By J. CHITTY, Esq. Barrister at Law. First American edition, with notes and additions, adapted to American works and Judicial decisions. Part I. pp. 509. Philadelphia, Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1835.

A work of this kind has long been a *desideratum*, for although, in consequence of the greater attention that has of late years been paid to medical jurisprudence, numerous treatises on this science are constantly making their appearance; they are, with few exceptions, calculated for the medical reader alone, and hence do not sufficiently explain the anatomical and physiological questions connected with the various points attempted to be elucidated. This is the

great fault of the otherwise excellent work of Paris and Fonblanque; the learned authors constantly allude to anatomical and physiological proofs in support of their views, which, though familiar to the physician, are wholly unknown to most members of the legal profession.

That a knowledge of the principles of medical jurisprudence and the facts on which they are founded, should be generally promulgated, scarcely requires an argument in its favour; it must be evident that an acquaintance with these subjects is highly important to our legislators, as they have to enact laws relating to public health, &c. and even effecting the medical profession itself.

"Should individuals, says the author, attempt to legislate upon matters concerning public health or police, unless they be acquainted with the principles applicable to the subject, and the probable consequences of supposed injuries, and ought they by statute, to prescribe punishment for injuries unless they know their natural or probable consequences; or would they hastily enact prohibitory clauses or laws of quarantine, so injurious to foreign commerce, on an ill founded ground that certain diseases were infectious."

But it is still more incumbent on all persons concerned in the administration or practice of the law to be able of themselves to appreciate the value of medical evidence, so as not to be obliged to be implicitly governed by the dictum of a medical witness. To lawyers engaged in criminal courts, it is of the highest importance to have such a general knowledge of physiology, &c. as will enable them to put such questions to witnesses as will elicit the fullest information, instead of, (as is too often the case at present,) of perplexing with queries that either cannot be answered, or are totally irrelevant to the point at issue.

"How disastrous to his credit and how painful to his feelings, would it be to hear it asserted, after the execution of a prisoner, that the conviction was attributable to his counsel not having put, or having injudiciously put, a particular medical question, or generally proper questions, connected with the subject."

But it is not alone, to the persons above alluded to, that such information is useful, there is scarcely a rank or condition of life in which an acquaintance with the topics discussed in the volume before us may not prove useful, and even admitting that an individual may pass through life without having occasion to make a practical application of it, such an extension of knowledge must necessarily enlarge the scale of human happiness, and tend to remove many of the evils under which society now labours.

In the present volume,—which, although complete in itself as regards the topics on which it treats, it is intended as an introduction to others,—the author has described and explained in a concise, yet plain manner, the structure of man in a healthy state, and at the same time noticed the principal diseases affecting each organ or function.

Whenever the subject under consideration has any direct bearing on the elucidation of medico-judicial questions, these are fully discussed; thus under the head of generation, all circumstances that may tend to explain the offences connected with miscarriage, abortion, premature birth, infanticide, &c. are fully investigated.

The work is also rendered more useful by numerous plates, and a most copious and elaborate index; this latter is the more necessary, as the work being intended rather as a standard book of reference, than to be read or studied consecutively, those persons who wish to gain information on the questions con-

nected with any particular case or inquiry are thus enabled to turn to the parts practically applicable.

One of the most valuable peculiarities of the work are the constant and copious references to the best authorities; the author observes on this:—

“I have, with considerable care and anxiety, collected, condensed, and arranged in analytical order, the best improved modern doctrines and authorities, medical as well as legal, upon every part of the subjects, and have constantly referred to some of the best works, so as to ensure accuracy, and enable the students, whether in Law or Physic, to resort to the highest sources for future information.”

As we before observed, this volume is the first of a series, the whole of which it is stated, will be brought out as speedily as circumstances will admit. The second part is to contain a practical view of pathology and surgery, with statements and observations on the rules of law connected with the various subjects discussed. The third part is to be devoted to the consideration of the laws relating to public health and police, to injuries affecting the person, and a comprehensive view of medical jurisprudence, police and evidence. The fourth part will give the laws relative to members of the medical profession in particular, whilst the fifth and last will treat on medical evidence.

In the American Edition of this valuable work, the publishers state that they have spared no pains or expense to render it generally useful, and that for this purpose the text has undergone a thorough revision, and numerous additions have been made from our own standard treatises on Anatomy and Physiology; of the value and number of these additional references, some idea may be formed, from the long list of American works employed, which is appended to the preface.

In conclusion, we may remark, that after a careful perusal of this work, that we can recommend it to those classes of the community for whom it is specially designed, as admirably calculated to supply that practical information on anatomy and physiology, so important to the due administration and elucidation of many of our laws, and we trust that its reception will be such as to induce a republication of the remaining parts.

R. E. G.